Obituary

Professor Dr. Türkan Saylan 1935–2009

Dr. Saylan was born in 1935 in Istanbul. She graduated from the Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine in 1963 and specialised in Dermato-Veneriology. Dr. Saylan spent one year at St. John’s Hospital as a British Council Scholar and studied histopathology.

She started working in the Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine in 1968; she became associate Professor in 1972 and Professor in 1977. She worked as the President of the Dermatology Department at Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine between 1982 and 1987. She was also the Director of Leprosy Study Centre of the Istanbul University Faculty of Medicine between 1980 and 2001.

In 1976 she began working in the field of leprosy, establishing the Association to Fight Against Leprosy, and conducted the National Leprosy Control Program until the end of 2002.

She was awarded the ‘International Gandhi Award’ in 1986 in India for her leprosy work for rural development.

She was a consultant to WHO in leprosy, and also one of the founder members of International Leprosy Union (ILU), working with that organisation until the end of June 2006.

She founded and worked voluntarily as the Director of the Istanbul Leprosy Hospital between 1981 and 2002 until her retirement. She was also the founder of the ‘Association of University Teachers’ (1990).

Dr. Saylan and her friends formed the ‘Association in Support of Contemporary Living ( ÇYDD)’ in 1989, and she was President of this Association.

She was one of the founding members (1990) of the ‘Women’s Study Centre of the University of Istanbul’ and taught ‘Women’s Health’ for 3 years. She was also the founder (1995) and the president of KANKEV (Foundation of the high school from which she graduated).

In 1991 she was given Melvin Jones Prize by Lions; in 1997 the Kuvayi Milliye prize by Rotarians and the Fahrettin Gökay prize by the Turkish Lions Foundation. She was also awarded the ‘Atatürk’s Principles and Reforms Prize’ by the Senate of the University of Istanbul in 1996, with the ‘Honorary Prize’ by the Rifat Ilgaz Cultural Centre in 2000.
Dr. Saylan established, with a group of university members, a programme for students named ‘Guidance, Advisory and Social Support’ at the university beginning in 1999.

She was selected as an honorary member of the Dermatologist’s Dowling Club of England (1978), and the North American Clinical Dermatology Association (1996), and had been a member of the International Leprosy Association since 1998.

In 2001, she was awarded a golden medal for her studies in dermatology in medicine by the Institution of ‘Foyer des Artistes’ in Italy and she was presented with the Prize of ‘Atatürk Society of America’. In 2002 she was also awarded the Art Society’s honorary prize.

She was selected as member of the Consultative Committee of Social Services by Süleyman Demirel, the former President of the Republic of Turkey on 31 March 2000, and she was also appointed a member of the Superior Education Council (YÖK) by Mr. A. Necdet Sezer, the President of the Republic of Turkey on 2 February, 2001. She continued to be part of this council up until her death.

She represented ÇYDD in the Prime Ministry Human Rights Consultation Committee and in the Human Rights Committee of the city of Istanbul.

Professor Dr. Türkan Saylan had 440 publications till mid 2005. Fifty of these are her medical studies which have been published on foreign reviews; 204 of them are her articles on medical, social and political subjects in the newspapers; and the last 186 are her research reports or declaration papers which have been published in medical periodicals or books of congresses in the Turkish Language.

She worked in the publishing committees of five books; three of them contains seminary notes. Her text book titled ‘Hand Book for Dermato – Veneriology on the First Step of Health Services’ has made its fifth edition. Her two books titled ‘Being an individual of the Republic Nr. I and II’ consisting of her social and political articles, and ‘At Kiz’ (Horse Girl) on the memories of her childhood has made its third edition.

Her life story has been published as a book named ‘Sun rises from hope now’ in 2004 and has made its fourth edition in a short time. She retired from her official positions at the end of 2002 and continued as the Director of three NGO’s until she died.

She has two sons (one is a medical doctor and other is graphist) and two grandchildren. She passed away on 18th May 2009.